
Comprehensive Crime Prevention

The Governor's Plan for Virginia

Department of Criminal Justice Services
Virginia Crime Prevention Center



Governor's Comprehensive Crime Prevention Plan for Virginia



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Preface

The Problem of Violence

The images are all too familiar. In a residential neighborhood in Richmond, a series of armed robberies spreads fear among residents. In Fairfax County, three men hold up a convenience store, killing the clerk and wounding a customer. In Henrico County, an 11 year-old boy is “convicted” of two counts of sodomy for sexual assaults on two seven year-old boys. In Salem, a 16 year-old is assaulted by another juvenile who is given a “slap on the hand” for the offense. This treatment enables the offender to attack the victim a second time. Meanwhile, in Hampton, a 16 year-old student is stabbed and killed by another student in a high school parking lot.

Violence has become commonplace in the Commonwealth. And the impact of that violence is affecting nearly every aspect of our lives. Just the costs alone are staggering. An analysis of the 300 gunshot victims treated at the Medical College of Virginia in 1991, indicated that 80 percent of the victims did not have medical insurance. Yet, it cost an average of \$17,000 to treat a gunshot wound. All told, in 1991, approximately \$3.5 million in costs were left unpaid by gunshot victims at MCV. That’s just one hospital, in one city.

Medical and corrections costs can be measured; however, it is more difficult to measure other costs that our communities pay. Violent crime robs us of our security, our freedom, and our peace. Those costs, reflected in the way Virginians live their lives, may be far more substantial than the costs to the system.

While we must continue to work to improve the system and hold offenders accountable for their actions, we must also re-direct our prevention efforts to address violence in our communities, in our schools, on the road, and in the places we live and work.

Need for Prevention

It’s time to stop crime! The citizens of Virginia are more fearful of crime and violence than perhaps ever before in our history. Too often they find themselves confined to their homes. They feel as though they are living in a war zone, and they believe themselves to be losing

the battle. This must change. Even as we look to increase the sanctions for violent offenders, we must also implement comprehensive long and short term prevention efforts.

Prevention works. Fifteen years ago in Virginia, there were 64,020 burglaries. By 1993, the number had dropped to 43,338, a decrease of nearly 21,000 burglaries. What caused the decrease? A crime prevention program called Neighborhood Watch.

Twenty-five years ago, cars had few features to protect riders from injury. Today, we have seat belts and airbags. We have enhanced side-impact designs and anti-lock brakes. And we have a public that continues to demand additional safety features. True, there is no one design feature that can ensure the complete safety of automobile passengers, but, taken together, these features go a long way in protecting us.

Similarly, because there is no one cause for violence, there is no one “silver bullet” to prevent it. Rather, in Virginia, we are building a comprehensive crime prevention plan, bringing together neighborhoods and communities across the Commonwealth to alleviate violent crime and the fear of such crime.

In order to make our homes, our schools, our places of work, and our communities safe, this comprehensive plan addresses:

- Community Involvement
- School/Youth Safety
- Serious Juvenile Offenders
- Law Enforcement Services
- Environmental Design Programs
- Workplace Violence
- Travel Safety
- Intergovernmental Collaboration

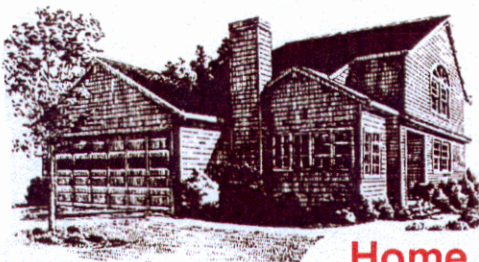
In the fight against crime, the police can't do it all, the schools can't do it all, social services can't do it all - nor were they meant to do so. Instead, such support services must be balanced with the need for personal responsibility and neighborhood cohesiveness.

Still, we must remember, prevention efforts don't produce results overnight. Instead they require us - every one of us - to admit the problem, to roll up our sleeves, and to work long and hard to stop violence. Only then will we make our neighborhoods truly safe for Virginians.



"We must direct our prevention efforts to address violence in our communities, in our schools, on the road, and in the places we work and live." *Governor George Allen*

Governor's Comprehensive Crime Prevention Plan





Prevention: Breaking the Chain

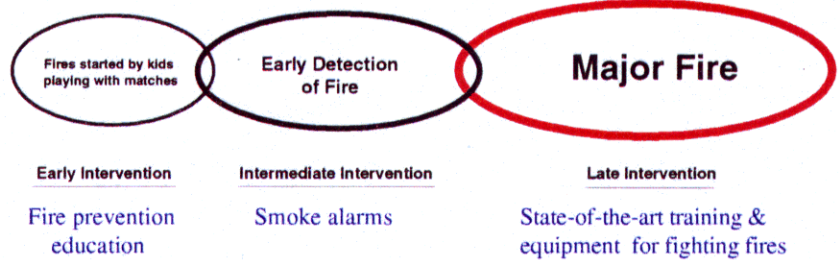
■ Prevention looks for all the opportunities to reduce or eliminate the frequency and severity of dangerous situations

■ Successful prevention programs focus on all the links in the chain of events leading to the unwanted outcome.

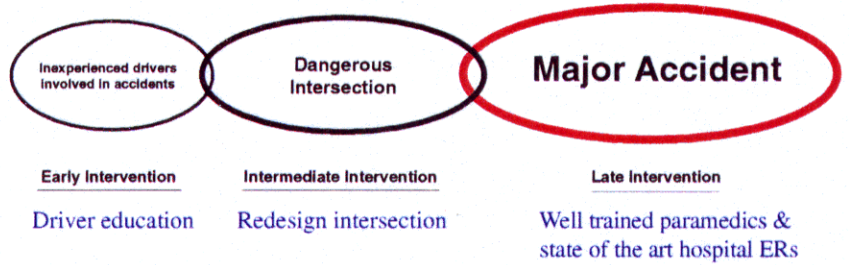
■ The earlier we break the chain of events, the more pain, suffering and cost we can avoid.

Successful Prevention Models

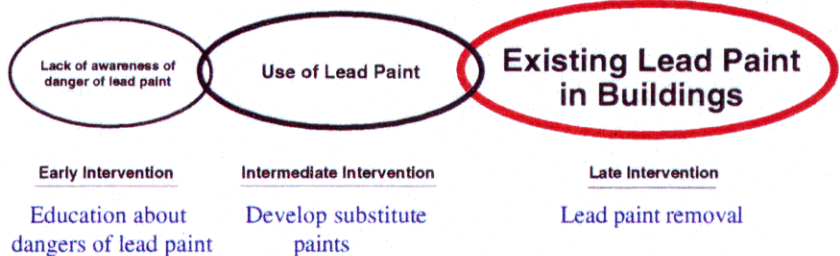
Fire



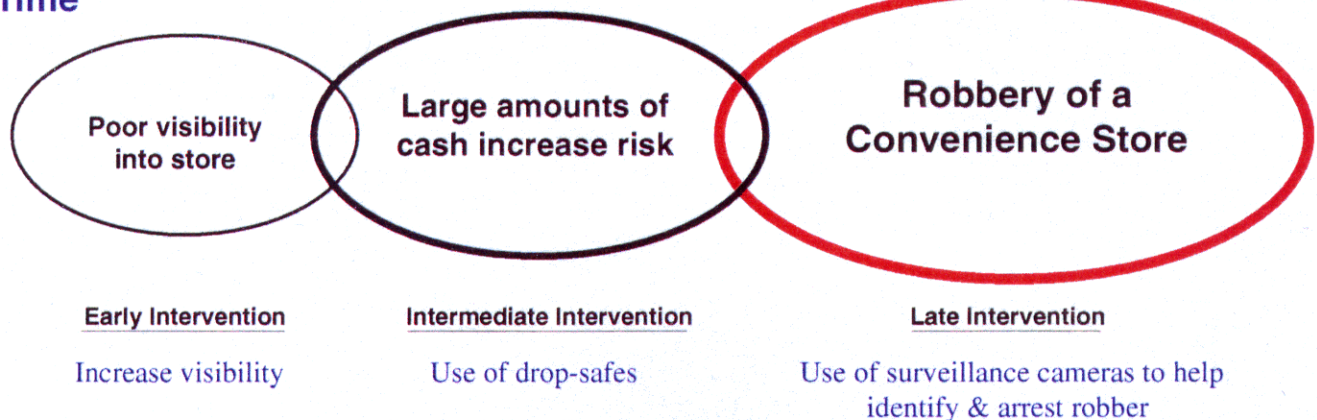
Traffic



Public Health



Crime





Community Involvement

GOAL

To create opportunities for citizens throughout the Commonwealth to become more involved in providing for the safety of their neighborhoods

■ Action

- Establish a Governor's Award Program recognizing "Media Leadership in Crime Prevention."
- Provide grants and technical assistance to localities to develop or enhance community crime prevention councils.
- Promote successful crime prevention programs such as Neighborhood Watch, Business Watch, Law Enforcement Explorer Scouts, "National Night Out", and "Turn Off The Violence".
- Develop televised delinquency prevention programs aimed at Virginia's youth.
- Endorse a state-wide program to recruit and use auxiliary police officers and deputy sheriffs throughout the Commonwealth.
- Establish and promote clear, healthy standards of community behavior.

■ Impact

- Enables community residents to participate directly in maintaining the safety and order of their neighborhoods.
- Enables communities to develop local responses to local problems.
- Identifies and consolidates the resources of a locality to address crime with a comprehensive community-based plan.
- Provides information about community crime problems to organizations and agencies with a duty or interest in addressing them.
- Institutionalizes support for community policing.
- Recognizes the role of media in community crime prevention efforts.
- Promotes healthy family lifestyles and values.
- Heightens awareness of the impact of violence in media.

■ Justification

Violent crime and fear of crime is destroying or severely reducing the quality of life in localities throughout the state. People want to become more involved in making their communities safer, but are not sure how to channel their volunteer spirit into action. In some communities, residents feel that they and government have lost control of their neighborhoods to criminals. To reduce violent crime and the crippling fear it creates, residents must take an active role in providing for the safety of their neighborhoods.

Community crime prevention councils are an excellent way to become involved. The councils identify and organize public and private resources of the community to address crime. The councils can consolidate and coordinate interests such as crime prevention, domestic violence, child abuse, and victim services and should involve law enforcement, the schools, social services, the courts, civic organizations, businesses, community planning and economic development.

Additionally, any community program must recognize the influence of the media. According to the Nielsen Television Rating Service, a child between the ages of six and 11 watches an average of 26 hours of television each week. Thus, by the time a child graduates from high school, he will have spent more time in front of a TV than he will have spent in a classroom. Also, by the time that child reaches age 18, he will have witnessed nearly 18,000 television murders and a total of approximately 200,000 acts of violence.

Educational programming, such as "Sesame Street," is grounded in the accepted belief that programming influences human behavior. Just as educational programming can influence positive behaviors, violence in the media sets an example that violence is an acceptable, even attractive, means of resolving a problem.



School/Youth Safety

GOAL

To strengthen our families, schools, and communities to ensure the safety of our children

■ Action

- Establish a Governor's Annual Conference on Youth Safety.
- Develop a school safety plan for every school in the Commonwealth.
- Conduct safety and security assessments of all schools in the Commonwealth.
- Establish and promote strong academic standards for all children.
- Implement statewide conflict resolution training program for families.
- Provide youth violence and school safety training for all teachers, administrators and law enforcement officers who work with students.
- Establish a program to enable communities to provide school resource officers for all secondary, middle, and elementary schools.
- Ensure that school personnel are provided with necessary information on students charged with criminal conduct.
- Establish sufficient statewide alternative education facilities for those students whose behavior does not allow them to remain in public schools.
- Revise the annual school violence data instrument to include appropriate incident-based reporting elements.
- Ensure that the parent/guardian of any child in Virginia, who has been disciplined for a criminal offense, participate in an appropriate educational session to address the behavior and the means to correct it.

■ Impact

- Provides safe environment so that students may focus on learning.
- Establishes clear expectations for students, parents, staff, and the community.
- Provides aggressive students with alternative, acceptable behaviors.

■ Justification

Every child in Virginia should feel safe and secure. Yet, today, families in Virginia are under siege. Ethical relativism, constant exposure to media violence, the increase in teenage pregnancies, troubled families, the influence of drugs, delinquency, social and economic deprivation, and lack of cohesive neighborhoods all contribute to the risk for delinquent behavior.

We know that no one factor causes delinquent behavior. We also know which protective factors can be used to enhance the safety of our children. We must strengthen as many of these protective factors as we can in order to build strong, healthy, self-reliant children.

According to the Department of Education, last year, over 24,000 fights were reported on public school grounds in the Commonwealth. Additionally, 2,313 incidents of weapons violations were also reported. Unfortunately, the safety of our students has become a critical issue facing all Virginians.

If our schools are no longer safe, then our teachers can no longer teach, and our children can no longer learn. Thus, the changing school climate demands a swift and comprehensive response. We cannot let a few violent juveniles interfere with the safety and security of the rest of our youngsters. We must require appropriate, disciplined behavior from our students. And, we must provide them with a safe, secure, and welcoming school climate - an environment free from fear and free from crime.



SHOCAP

Serious or Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program

GOAL

To protect the community from violent juvenile crime, and to ensure comprehensive service delivery to serious or habitual offenders

■ Action

- Develop a grant program to assist communities in responding to serious juvenile crime.
- Provide close and intense community supervision to that relatively small population of juveniles that commits habitual or serious offenses to further ensure the safety of the public.
- Ensure that juveniles who commit especially violent or serious offenses are swiftly identified and securely detained in order to prevent further victimization of the public and reduce the opportunity for repeat offenders.
- Improve the collection, analysis, and dissemination of juvenile crime data in order to more accurately identify juvenile crime in a community.

■ Impact

- Allows direct service providers access to more complete juvenile data to better understand the extent of the juvenile's problems, offenses, strengths, and weaknesses, as opposed to the fragmented bits of information that are commonly relied upon to make these important decisions.
- Increases public safety and decreases the opportunity for crime by providing intense supervision, treatment, and enforcement efforts on that small population of violent juveniles that are responsible for a disproportionate amount of criminal activity.
- Provides a forum for interagency information-sharing, thereby removing the traditional "cloak of secrecy" under which many juvenile agencies have operated for so long.

■ Justification

Violent crime is an activity of the young. Much of the violent crime in Virginia, including murder, is committed by those between the ages of 15 to 24, peaking at age 18. Although the number of juveniles in the crime-prone age group hit a 20-year low in 1992, it has begun to rise and will increase by 30 percent by 2002. Further, it is predicted that if we fail to act now, Virginia may experience the biggest crime wave it has seen in recent history.

As a result of the growing involvement of juveniles in serious and habitual crime, the 1993 General Assembly passed the Serious or Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program (SHOCAP), enabling communities in the Commonwealth to respond to juveniles who have been adjudicated delinquent or convicted of murder or attempted murder, armed robbery, any felony sexual assault or malicious wounding; or convicted at least three times for offenses which would be Class 1 misdemeanors or felonies if committed by an adult.

Justification *continued*

Once enacted by a community, the legislation brings together a committee composed of representatives from law enforcement, the schools, attorneys for the Commonwealth, juvenile court services, juvenile detention centers, mental and medical health agencies, and the Department of Youth and Family Services to share information on serious or habitual offenders. The combined efforts of this committee serve to provide a more coordinated public safety approach to serious juvenile crime, increase the opportunity for success with juvenile offenders, and assist in the development of early intervention strategies.



Law Enforcement Services

GOAL

To enhance community safety through the analysis of crime data and enhanced service delivery to the community

■ Action

- Establish a grant program to implement incident-based reporting in localities throughout the Commonwealth as soon as possible.
- Provide advanced crime prevention training and technical assistance to law enforcement agencies across the Commonwealth.
- Provide risk assessment and crime analysis training for local law enforcement officers.
- Develop and promote crime analysis techniques to enhance enforcement and prevention activities.
- Encourage law enforcement agencies to provide schools with school crime-related data.
- Encourage and develop regional crime analysis networks.
- Assist localities in implementing the crime prevention standards for law enforcement agencies.
- Promote certification of law enforcement personnel as Crime Prevention Specialists.
- Integrate community policing initiatives with proven crime prevention techniques.

■ Impact

- Provides a technologically sophisticated means for identifying and apprehending criminals.
- Improves the utilization of a community's resources.
- Establishes interagency communication within jurisdictions to better track criminal activity and promotes information exchange to prevent duplicity of work and foster an atmosphere of cooperation.
- Promotes professionalism.
- Standardizes crime prevention services.
- Supports initiatives in community policing.

■ Justification

Law enforcement is the primary crime prevention service provider. The interest in crime prevention has grown as more law enforcement agencies have adopted the philosophy of community policing. In the past, law enforcement relied primarily on arrest and incarceration to maintain community safety. Now we know that problem-solving which includes citizen involvement is much more effective.

However, today we also have the problem of increased mobility. Criminals know no jurisdictional boundaries. They regularly move from one community to another in search of opportunities to commit crime. As a result, law enforcement authorities must develop a systematic means by which to share information on crime. The sharing and analysis of crime-related data across jurisdictional boundaries is a necessary task in order to beat criminals at their own game.

Crime analysis has ventured beyond the narrow scope of traditional reactive police activities and now encompasses a wide variety of uses such as the identification of crime trends for long-term planning and problem solving within the community, and the establishment of crime prevention direction and community policing programs.



Safer by Design

GOAL

To establish the safer by design approach as a routine practice in Virginia

■ Action

- Establish a Safer By Design Consortium of architectural and urban planning programs within Virginia's universities to develop a curriculum for architecture, engineering, urban planning and public administration students which incorporates Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).
- Encourage localities to incorporate CPTED practices into the master planning process, development, zoning requirements and site plan reviews.
- Sponsor an annual Governor's Crime Prevention Student Design Competition for students of architecture.
- Promote crime prevention as a critical component of economic development.
- Promote the expansion of proven CPTED practices in the Uniform Statewide Building Code.
- Require a CPTED component in all master plans of state facilities and CPTED reviews for construction of all new state buildings.

■ Impact

- Lessens property owners' exposure to negligent security lawsuits.
- Reduces rates of victimization without driving up construction costs.
- Addresses crime at the front end, or primary level, much like fire prevention and public health do very effectively.
- Saves costs to the taxpayers by reducing the number of investigations, arrests, prosecutions and prison commitments.

■ Justification

The Safer By Design, or CPTED, concept is one of the most impressive and cost effective primary prevention strategies available. It considers crime risks at the front-end when designing buildings. While it might also involve the application of traditional security measures, the concept focuses on making buildings less crime-prone without turning them into fortresses. This is achieved through subtle changes in design based on how, when and where crimes typically occur. The best example of a successful application of CPTED is the low crime rate experienced in the Washington Metro compared to the high crime rate in the New York City Subway.

Justification *continued*

CPTED's potential will only be realized when architects, planners, developers, landscape architects and police consider the risk of crime at the planning stage, much like the routine practices involved in planning for fire prevention or traffic safety. Strong advocacy of CPTED will be a major step toward achieving true front-end prevention.



Workplace Violence

GOAL

To target workplace violence as a priority prevention concern to Virginians

■ Action

- Enhance and expand safety and security training to businesses and workers at high risk of criminal victimization.
- Promote an aggressive agenda of formulating and testing innovative crime prevention strategies at high-risk locations.
- Establish an interagency work group to better track incidents and coordinate analysis of workplace violence affecting state employees.
- Develop violent threat assessment and incident reaction policies and procedures for state agencies.
- Develop a personal safety training model for employees in high-risk assault categories.

■ Impact

- Enlists the support, cooperation, and energy of the private sector.
- Enhances economic development by fostering safer workplaces.
- Addresses the growing fear of crime expressed by workers.
- Demonstrates leadership by setting an agenda on an issue that is emerging as a serious violent crime problem nationally.

■ Justification

Violence in the workplace has emerged as a serious worker safety issue. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has determined homicide is the third leading cause of death for all U.S. workers on the job and the leading cause of death for women while at work.

Occupations involving late night hours, working alone, and large amounts of cash (taxi drivers, convenience store clerks, and pizza delivery), have been identified as being particularly at-risk of stranger-to-stranger victimization. To address this issue, DCJS is presently working with NIOSH on two research projects aimed at understanding how to better prevent robbery and homicide at convenience stores.

Since violence in the workplace is an issue whose parameters are just emerging, it is an issue begging for leadership. The charge is to develop broad-based strategies to reduce violence in the workplace.



Travel Safety

GOAL

To develop a statewide interagency program in cooperation with the private sector to promote and enhance safer family, business and tourist travel within the state

■ Action

- Establish a public/private sector work group to develop and promote traveler safety strategies and develop a travel safety risk assessment program.
- Promote guest safety campaigns with the hospitality industry.
- Incorporate crime prevention tips into travel information distributed by state agencies.
- Promote bus/rail station crime prevention strategies.

■ Impact

- Enhances the State Police's crime prevention efforts along Virginia's highways.
- Enhances economic development by promoting Virginia as a safe place to live, vacation, and travel.
- Maintains Virginia's national leadership role in private partnership crime prevention programs.
- Establishes a model private/public sector program for other states.

■ Justification

The Virginia State Police, in cooperation with the American Truck Stop Foundation, the National Association of Truck Stop Operators, and the Departments of Transportation and Tourism, possess the ability to develop a significant safe travel program. Today, businesses such as truckstops are changing the way they do business in order to become more appealing to individual, family, and business travelers. These changes have attracted small satellite businesses. Increased business has resulted in increased opportunities for crime.

To promote crime prevention awareness, the State Police, other state agencies, and the private sector should promote and provide services that greatly reduce the potential for traveler victimization along the Commonwealth's highways and railways. Services in the form of crime threat assessments, interagency assistance in identifying problem areas that promote potential criminal activity, and the development of public awareness activities will greatly enhance public safety and state crime prevention efforts.



Intergovernmental Collaboration

GOAL

To foster interagency collaboration to deliver crime prevention services

■ Action

- Establish a Crime Prevention Executive Institute for community and governmental leaders.
- Establish a state level Interagency Task Force on Crime Prevention.
- Provide assistance to localities seeking to develop comprehensive interagency plans to address crime.
- Direct each state agency to develop a crime prevention plan for crimes against employees and patrons at state facilities.
- Provide training, technical assistance, and incentives to local code enforcement teams throughout the state.

■ Impact

- Allows government agencies to work together, to pool information, and to assist one another in responding to various crime problems.
- Develops a better understanding of the extent of crime committed against state employees and facilities.
- Provides for crime prevention services for the state's largest employer.

■ Justification

Crime is not just a law enforcement and community problem, it is also a problem that is affecting economic development, employment, and education. Many of the local and state government agencies responsible for these issues have not been given a mission in the fight against crime. Through coordination of services and sharing of information, state and local agencies which have a responsibility for building codes, enforcement, community planning, work place safety, education and others can be organized to bring together more resources and knowledge to address crime in a more comprehensive manner.